



Pausing for self-compassion

Welcome to the RelationKit mindfulness series. Today we'll take a pause, tune into our feelings, and take time to talk to ourselves with compassion.

So pausing now, and become still wherever you are, whether that's sitting or standing, it doesn't matter. Take some deeper breaths in and out of your body, and then let your breath find its natural rhythm, just this breath flowing in and just this breath flowing out.

If you feel comfortable you can place your hands on your heart or even give yourself a hug now, bringing yourself into this moment. Check in with yourself and acknowledge how you feel right now. Is there some stress there? Or struggle going on inside, maybe to do with your child or your child's other parent? Open your attention to that, just as it is.

You are gently turning towards these feelings of discomfort, pain or suffering within and seeing if you can treat yourself with as much understanding and kindness as you can muster, as you would a close friend who was having a difficulty. Recognising that this is moment of suffering for you, and that ok.

And now offer yourself phrases of compassion such as *"It's okay to feel like this," "That was really difficult for me" or "This is suffering, and it's okay to feel this way in this moment" or "I try so hard to be a good parent or partner but it's still so hard"*.

What do you need to hear right now? Invite real honesty to yourself here, seeing how you are suffering in this moment, but also reminding yourself that suffering is part of life. We all suffer from time to time.

"I am a parent who struggles and finds it hard".

All parents struggle or suffer, feel guilty, feel like a failure from time to time – it's all part of being a parent; it's all part and parcel of being human. We have that connection!

And now offer yourself phrases such as *"May I hold myself in compassion," "May I love and respect myself just as I am," May I treat myself with love and kindness," "May I experience peace."*

Feel how hearing these phrases plays out in your body and mind. Keep your hand to your heart if it's helpful, feeling the warm and gentle touch that gives you, or release it down now. Take some more time with your breath. Your breath is soft and soothing, as if it brings with it a gentleness, a tenderness, soothing away any tension, stress or struggle you feel, melting it away with this healing balm that is the breath.

Repeating any of those compassionate phrases, if you wish, if they spoke to you in a warm hearted, nurturing way:

"May I hold myself in compassion," "May I love and respect myself just as I am," May I treat myself with love and kindness," "May I experience peace."

Self-compassion makes you stronger and wiser and then more able to help others in your life out of their suffering. You can offer them more compassion.

As Pema Chodron a beloved spiritual teacher, author, and mother, suggests: *"The root of compassion is self-compassion."*

In this moment notice how you are; any feelings that were there before, have they softened a little? Just notice.

Gently finish your practice and slowly come back into your room.

See if you can be just a little softer with yourself for the remainder of your day.

Take care until next time.